Depletion in Forest land

935. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD:

SHRI PRABHAKAR B. KORE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that forest land has been shrinking due to various reasons roads, communications, railways, industries including river valley projects, agriculture, and if so, the details thereof;

(b) what steps Government have taken so far to stop this downward trend;

(c) whether new technology of tissue culture has made any tangible dent on deforestation and if so, the details thereof including total number of trees planted since 1989; and

(d) whether deforestation programmes have made any tangible progress in the country and if so, the results of evaluation, if any made, including the results of satellite surveys?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir. There has been a marginal decrease in the notified forest land area due to the various development projects such as river valley projects, agriculture, roads, communications, railways, industries, etc. The Forest (Conservation) Act in 1980 and its amendment has brought about a salutory effects on diversion of forest and for non forestry uses. In the course of last eleven years, 2,98,883 ha. of forest lands have been diverted, and in lieu thereof, compensatory afforestation over 86,252 ha. has been carried out so far against total stipulated compensatory afforestation 3,47,480 ha.

(b) Government has taken a number of initiatives and measures to curb deforestation. Details are given in the Statement. (*See* below)

(c) Approximately 15,000 tissue culture raised plants of forest tree species have been transferred for conducting field evaluation trials in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

(d) In view of the Conservation strategies envisaged National Forest Policy 1988, enforcement of the Forest Conservation act 1980, and massive afforestation including Social Forestry and Agroforestry programmes under 20 Point Programme, in the last decade, there has been an aggregate increase in Forest Cover of the Country to the tune of 560 sq. kms. as brought out in the assessment based on the visual interpretation of the Satellite imageries pertaining to the period 1987-89 by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun.

Statement

While denudation of forests is continuing because of acute biotic pressure, the pace of deforestation has been arrested in recent years. The following measures have been taken to check deforescation and increase area under forests:—

1. Forest (Conservation) Act was enacted in 1980 to check diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes.

2. A centrally sponsored scheme is being implemanted to assist the States to develop infrastructure for protection of forest land for non-forest purposes.

3. Alternative sources of energy are being developed to replace fuelwood in domestic and commercial sectors.

4. Wood is being substituted by alternative materials in packaging, railway sleepers, building construction etc.

5. Import policy for forest products has been liberalised.

6. Fiscal incentives are given to industries for wood substitution.

7. Efforts are being made to control shifting cultivation.

8. Guidelines have been issued to State Governments from time to time for protection of forests. Some of these guidelines are as follows:

(i) To avoid clear felling of natural forests and where such felling are inevitable for restoration of crop or

other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to areas not exceeding 10 hectares in the hills and 25 hectares in the plains.

(ii) To consider banning of fellings in the hills above 1000 metres, at least for some years.

(iii) To identify critical areas in the hills and mountains which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigorous afforestation.

(iv) To set apart 4 per cent of the geographical areas as protected area like wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, biospare reserves etc.

9. A massive afforestation Programme is being implemented by National Wasteland Development Board.

High polluting industries

936. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the indusries that being to the highly polluting category;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government had given time till December 31, 1991 to meet the prescribed standards for the industries that belong to the 17 highly polluting categories;

(c) if so, whether the concerned State Governments have enforced the time limit; and

(d) if not, what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (d) The names of 17 highly polluting categories are: sugar, fertilizers, cement, fermentation & distillery, aluminium smelting, petrochemicals, thermal power, caustic soda, oil refinery, tanneries, copper smelting, zinc smelting, iron & steel, pulp & paper, dye and dye intermediates, pesticides and basic drugs & pharmaceuticals.

The State Governments have identified the units with respect to the compliance with the pollution control standards in the 17 caegories of industries. According to the information provided by the State Governments, out of the total number of 3094 units, 150 units have not initiated action for complying with the pollution control standards.

An industry, operation or process which has commenced production on or before 16th May, 1981, and has shown adequate proof of at least commencement of physical work for establishment of facilities to meet the specified standards within a time-bound programme, to the satisfaction of the concerned State Pollution Control Board, shall comply with such standards latest by the 31st day of December, 1993.

An industry, operation or process which has commenced production after the 16th day of May, 1981 but before the 31st day of December, 1991, and as shown adequate proof of at least commencement of physical work for establishment of facilities to meet the specified standards within a time-bound programme, to the satisfaction of the concerned State Pollution Control Board, shall comply with such standards latest by the 31st day of December, 1992.

Special courts regarding violation of the Water and Air pollution Acts

937. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States/Union Territories where special Courts have been constituted so far to deal with the cases regarding violation of the provisions of the water and Air Pollution Acts; and

(b) the number of cases which are pending in these Special Courts at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Special Courts have been set up the States of Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and the Union Territory of Delhi to deal with cases relating to violation of the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Conrol of Pollution) Act, 1981.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.